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HIGHLIGHTS:

2003 Crop Values

The value of Montana's 2003 **all wheat** crop rose 18 percent from 2002 to $525.7 million. Total production was up 25 percent but the season average price decreased $0.19 per bushel. The preliminary 2003 season average price for all wheat was $3.85 per bushel compared with $4.04 last season.

The value of Montana's **winter wheat** crop increased dramatically from last year to $235.5 million due to a large increase in acres harvested. The preliminary season average price was down $0.03 from last year to $3.70 per bushel. **Spring wheat's** value of production was down 26 percent from 2002 to $228.7 million. The season average price decreased $0.23 per bushel to $3.85. **Durum wheat's** season average price dropped $0.24 from 2002 to $4.25 per bushel. The total crop value of $61.6 million was up 6 percent from 2002.

The value of Montana's **oats** crop fell 38 percent from 2002 to $3.37 million. The season average price decreased $0.32 to $1.70 per bushel. Total value of production for **barley** was estimated at $94.8 million, down 17 percent from the previous year. The 2003 season average price, at $3.00, was up 14 cents from 2002. **Corn for grain** value of production for 2003 was estimated at $6.3 million dollars, up 41 percent from 2002. The average price per bushel increased $0.20 to $2.65.

Montana's value of production for **flaxseed** increased 7 percent to $1.28 million dollars in 2003. The price per bushel decreased $0.35 to $5.80. **Dry edible beans** value of production was estimated at $4.1 million, down 25 percent from 2002. The average price rose $2.40 per cwt to $17.60.

Value of production for **dry edible peas** in Montana, at $2.75 million, increased 86 percent from 2002. The average price per cwt decreased $1.10 to $6.10. **Austrian winter peas** value of production for the 2003 crop jumped to $689,000 from $200,000 in 2002. The average price per cwt was $12.30, up $2.30 from last year. **Lentils** value of production jumped to $3.96 million from $2.06 million in 2002. The average price increased $0.70 to $14.50 per cwt.

Montana's value of production for **potatoes** was $26.7 million, up slightly from the previous year. The average price per cwt was $8.00, $0.25 below 2002. **Sugar beets** value of production for 2002 is estimated at $44.94 million, up slightly from the previous year. The season average price jumped $2.20 per ton from 2001 to $41.00.

The 2003 season average price for **all hay** decreased $6.00 from last year to $76.50 per ton. The value of production was down 6 percent to $351.2 million. **Alfalfa hay's** 2003 season average price was estimated at $77.00, down $8.00 from last year while **other hay's** season average price decreased $2.00 to $72.50.

2003 Alfalfa Seed Production

Alfalfa seed production for 2003 was estimated at 2.1 million pounds, up 5% from the revised 2002 production. Harvested acreage at 6,200 was down 500 acres from last year's acreage of 6,700 acres. The state average yield was estimated at 335 pounds per acre, up from the 296 pounds per acre a year ago. Irrigated yields averaged 460 pounds per acre, up from 370 pounds in 2002 and non-irrigated yields averaged 90 pounds per acre, up 12 pounds from last year.

Producers used an average of 2.7 gallons of leaf cutter bees per acre on all acres harvested for alfalfa seed in 2003, compared with 3.1 gallons per acre in 2002. Leaf cutter bees were used on 39% of the reported irrigated acres at the rate of 3.8 gallons per acre and 12% of the reported non-irrigated acres at the rate of 0.4 gallons per acre. Alfalfa seed growers who utilized leaf cutter bees produced an average of 23% more seed per acre irrigated acre and 11% more per non-irrigated acre than those that did not use bees to pollinate their crop.

Proprietary varieties made up 23% of this year's production, common uncertified varieties accounted for 76% of the production and common certified varieties represented 1%.

The average price received for the 2003 crop was $1.01 per pound, down 14 cents from last year's average price.

ALFALFA SEED: Estimates by Agricultural Statistics Districts, 2003

District	TOTAL			IRRIGATED			NON-IRRIGATED		
	Acres	Yield	Production	Acres	Yield	Production	Acres	Yield	Production
		Pounds			Pounds			Pounds	
North Central	1,000	390	390,000	1,000	390	390,000	0	0	0
Northeast	700	360	252,000	500	470	235,000	200	80	16,000
Central	400	475	190,000	300	600	180,000	100	100	10,000
South Central	2,800	341	954,000	2,000	443	886,000	800	85	68,000
Southeast	1,300	222	289,000	300	650	195,000	1,000	95	95,000
Montana	**6,200**	**335**	**2,075,000**	**4,100**	**460**	**1,886,000**	**2,100**	**90**	**189,000**

2003 Wheat, Barley, and Oats County Estimates Now Available

The 2003 crop year county estimates for barley, oats, all wheat, winter wheat, durum wheat and spring wheat are now available. Estimates are made for acres planted, acres harvested for grain, average yield per harvested acre and production. Estimates are made by practices for irrigated crops and non-irrigated crops. Non-irrigated wheat and barley crops are further divided into cropping practices for acres that were re-cropped or continuously cropped and non-irrigated crops harvested from previously fallowed acres. Oats county estimates are estimated by practices of irrigated and non-irrigated only. These estimates are available on our website at www.nass.usda.gov/mt/ or they can be requested by calling or writing our office.

U.S. and Canadian Cattle

This publication is a result of a joint effort by Statistics Canada and NASS to release the number of cattle and calves by class and calf crop for both countries within one publication. This information was requested by the U.S. cattle industry to provide producers additional information about potential beef supplies. U.S. inventory numbers were previously released on January 30, 2004.

All cattle and calves in the **U. S. and Canada combined** totaled 109.5 million head on January 1, 2004, down slightly from a year ago. All cows and heifers that have calved, at 47.9 million head, was up slightly from a year ago.

All cattle and calves in the **United States** as of January 1, 2004, totaled 94.9 million head, 1 percent below the 96.1 million on January 1, 2003. All cows and heifers that have calved, at 41.9 million was down 1 percent from the 42.1 million on January 1, 2003.

All cattle and calves in **Canada** as of January 1, 2004, totaled 14.7 million head, up 9 percent from the 13.5 million on January 1, 2003. All cows and heifers that have calved, at 6.1 million, was up 5 percent from the 5.8 million on January 1, 2003.

U.S. Cattle on Feed Up 4 Percent

Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 11.1 million head on February 1, 2004. The inventory was 4 percent above February 1, 2003 but 4 percent below February 1, 2002.

Placements in feedlots during January totaled 1.75 million, 16 percent below 2003 and 20 percent below 2002. Net placements were 1.65 million. During January, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds were 362,000, 600-699 pounds were 466,000, 700-799 pounds were 576,000, and 800 pounds and greater were 342,000.

Marketings of fed cattle during January totaled 1.78 million, down 10 percent from 2003 and down 14 percent from 2002. Other disappearance totaled 94,000 during January, 25 percent above 2003 and 6 percent above 2002.

January 2004 Red Meat Production

Montana slaughter plants produced 1.1 million pounds, dressed weight, of red meat during January 2004, down 33 percent from last month and down 26 percent from January of 2003. Cattle slaughter totaled 1,200, down 33 percent from a year ago. The average live weight of 1,160 pounds increased by 10 pounds from last year.

During January 1,200 hogs were slaughtered, unchanged from a year ago. The average live weight at 238 pounds was down 4 pounds from last year. January sheep slaughter in the state totaled 300 head, the same as January 2003. The average live weight increased 5 pounds from last year to 128 pounds.

Commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 3.71 billion pounds in January, down 9 percent from the 4.07 billion pounds produced in January 2003.

Beef production, at 1.92 billion pounds, was 16 percent below the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.57 million head, down 14 percent from January 2003. The average live weight was 1,249 pounds, down 19 pounds from January a year ago.

Veal production totaled 16.0 million pounds, 10 percent below January a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 79,000 head, down 16 percent from January 2003. The average live weight was 336 pounds, up 18 pounds from January a year ago.

Pork production totaled 1.76 billion pounds, up 1 percent from the previous year. Hog kill totaled 8.79 million head, slightly above January 2003. The average live weight was 269 pounds, up 1 pound from January a year ago.

Lamb and mutton production, at 15.4 million pounds, was down 3 percent from January 2003. Sheep slaughter totaled 219,200 head, 8 percent below last year. The average live weight was 141 pounds, up 8 pounds from January a year ago.

U.S. January Milk Production Down 0.9 Percent

Milk production in the 20 major States during January totaled 12.5 billion pounds, down 0.9 percent from January 2003. December revised production, at 12.3 billion pounds, was down 0.2 percent from December 2002. The December revision represented an increase of 0.5 percent or 62 million pounds from last month's preliminary production estimate.

Production per cow in the 20 major States averaged 1,620 pounds for January, 5 pounds above January 2003. The number of cows on farms in the 20 major States was 7.72 million head, 92,000 head less than January 2003, but 5,000 head more than December 2003.

The annual production of milk for the U.S. during 2003 was 170.3 billion pounds, 0.1 percent above 2002. Revisions to 2002 production increased the annual total by 0.2 percent. Revised 2003 production was up 0.4 percent from last month's publication. Production per cow in the U.S. averaged 18,749 pounds for 2003, 141 pounds above 2002. The average annual rate of milk production per cow has increased 16 percent from 1994.

The average number of milk cows on farms in the U.S. during 2003 was 9.08 million head, down 0.6 percent from 2002. The average number of milk cows was revised down 2,000 head for 2002, and down 1,000 head for 2003.

Special Note: This issue contains monthly, quarterly, and annual revisions for 2002-2003. Preliminary 2002 Census data were used in the review process for the estimates included in this publication. States requiring a 5-year historical revision may carry a disjointed data series from the current historical data series. December 2002 and prior estimates contained in this publication will be republished in the Milk Cows and Production, Final Estimates 1998-2002 publication, which is scheduled for release on April 30, 2004.

Montana Potato Stocks Up 3 Percent, U.S. Up 1 Percent

Montana potato producers held 3.0 million cwt. of potatoes in storage on February 1, 2004, up 3 percent from the previous year. Ninety percent of the 2003 Montana potato crop is still in storage.

The 15 major potato States held 201 million cwt of potatoes in storage February 1, 2004, up 1 percent from last year and 4 percent above 2002. Potatoes in storage account for 50 percent of the 2003 fall storage States' production, up 1 percentage point from last year. Stocks by type were 4 percent red, 14 percent round white, 2 percent long white (Shepody), and 80 percent russet, with more reds and round whites and fewer russets than a year ago.

Disappearance of 203 million cwt from the start of harvest to February 1, is down 2 percent from the same period last year but 4 percent above two years ago. Shrink and loss, at 20.6 million cwt, is up 1 percent from last year and 5 percent above two years ago.

Processors used 101 million cwt of 2003 crop potatoes so far this season, down 5 percent from a year ago but 5 percent above two years ago. January usage of 14.6 million cwt is 1 percent below last year and 10 percent below two years ago. Dehydrators used 22.1 million cwt to date, down 7 percent from last year.

Western States held 136 million cwt of potatoes in storage on February 1, down 6 percent from last year and 1 percent below two years ago. Idaho's potato stocks are down 8 percent from last year, Washington decreased 1 percent, Colorado's storages held 20 percent less, and California lost 17 percent. Oregon's sheds stored 8 percent more than last year and Montana increased 3 percent.

Hired Workers Down 5 Percent, Wage Rates Up 1 Percent From a Year Ago

There were 847,000 hired workers on the Nation s farms and ranches during the week of January 11-17, 2004, down 5 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 667,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on f1arms and ranches made up the remaining 180,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of $9.41 per hour during the January 2004 reference week, up 7 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of $8.39 per hour, up 9 cents from last January, while livestock workers earned $8.84 per hour compared with $8.90 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at $8.55 per hour, was up 5 cents from last year.

The number of hours worked averaged 38.1 hours for hired workers during the survey week, up 1 percent from a year ago.

The largest decreases in number of hired farm workers from last year occurred in the Northeast I (New England and New York), Pacific (Oregon and Washington) and Mountain III (Arizona and New Mexico) regions and in California and Florida.

The largest increases in number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in the Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Lake (Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin), Southeast (Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina) and Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi) regions.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia), Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana and Ohio), Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri) and Delta regions.

Wage Rates for Hired Workers, by Region & U.S., January 12-18, 2003 & January 11-17, 2004 1/

U.S. and Region 2/	TYPE OF WORKER						Wage Rates for All Hired Workers	
	Field		Livestock		Field & Livestock			
	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004
	Dollars per Hour							
Northeast I	10.02	9.72	8.36	8.56	9.12	9.10	10.03	10.10
Northeast II	9.16	8.79	8.34	7.73	8.83	8.38	9.83	9.26
Appalachian I	8.22	8.36	8.58	8.76	8.40	8.53	9.34	9.16
Appalachian II	7.34	8.76	7.87	8.59	7.60	8.66	7.98	9.16
Southeast	7.50	7.67	8.96	7.61	8.12	7.65	8.87	8.10
FL	7.80	7.70	8.30	8.60	7.87	7.77	8.81	8.85
Lake	10.51	10.11	9.44	9.41	9.65	9.60	10.54	10.68
Cornbelt I	9.68	9.98	8.64	10.01	9.01	10.00	9.72	10.70
Cornbelt II	9.24	9.12	9.01	9.79	9.08	9.50	9.50	10.15
Delta	8.56	8.57	7.89	8.71	8.30	8.63	8.63	9.03
Northern Plains	9.18	9.89	9.43	8.78	9.37	9.11	10.00	9.75
Southern Plains	8.13	7.46	8.51	7.97	8.29	7.73	8.85	8.43
Mountain I	8.51	8.29	8.17	8.72	8.25	8.64	8.53	8.92
Mountain II	9.15	8.75	8.73	8.81	8.85	8.80	9.66	9.80
Mountain III	6.92	7.44	8.22	7.98	7.48	7.69	8.12	8.37
Pacific	8.63	8.58	9.93	9.31	8.87	8.78	9.71	9.82
CA	8.22	8.40	10.10	9.30	8.46	8.54	9.44	9.46
HI 3/	9.31	9.26	3/	3/	9.36	9.39	11.04	11.11
US 4/	8.30	8.39	8.90	8.84	8.50	8.55	9.34	9.41

1/ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers. 2/ Regions consist of the following Northeast I: CT, ME, MA, NH, NY, RI, VT. Northeast II: DE, MD, NJ, PA. Appalachian I: NC, VA. Appalachian II: KY, TN, WV. Southeast: AL, GA, SC. Lake MI, MN, WI. Cornbelt I: IL, IN, OH. Cornbelt II: IA, MO. Delta: AR, LA, MS. Northern Plains: KS, NE, ND, SD. Southern Plains: OK, TX. Mountain I: ID, MT, WY. Mountain II: CO, NV, UT. Mountain III: AZ, NM. Pacific: OR, WA. 3/ Insufficient data for livestock. 4/ Excludes AK.

Montana and United States Grazing Rates Increase

The average grazing fees paid by Montana producers for grazing livestock on privately owned, non-irrigated grazing land was higher for all methods except for per head in 2003. The average amount paid for grazing livestock on an AUM (animal unit month) basis was $15.20 per month, up 10 cents from last year. Cattle producers paid $17.40 per cow-calf pair in 2003, up 10 cents from the previous year. The average per head rate was $15.90 per month, down 40 cents from last year.

In the 17 States that estimate grazing fees in the United States, the average charge on an AUM basis was $12.30 per month in 2003, unchanged from the previous year. Cow-calf rates averaged $14.40 per month, up 20 cents and per head rates averaged $13.10 per month, up 40 cents from 2002.

All grazing fees are for privately-owned, non-irrigated grazing land. Rates charged for public land, irrigated land, and harvested cropland were excluded. The average AUM rate includes reported AUM rates plus reported cow-calf rates that were converted to an AUM basis. The cow-calf rate was converted to AUM basis using the following formula (1 AUM=cow-calf *0.833).

January U.S. Egg Production Down Slightly

U.S. egg production totaled 7.38 billion during January 2004, down slightly from last year. Production included 6.32 billion table eggs, and 1.06 billion hatching eggs, of which 996 million were broiler-type and 60.0 million were egg-type. The total number of layers during January 2004 averaged 338 million, down 1 percent from a year earlier. January egg production per 100 layers was 2,184 eggs, up 1 percent from January 2003.

January 2004 contained 22 weekdays, 2 holidays, and 5 Saturdays, compared to January 2003 which contained 23 weekdays, 2 holidays, and 4 Saturdays.

All layers in the U.S. on February 1, 2004, totaled 338 million, down 1 percent from a year ago. The 338 million layers consisted of 280 million layers producing table or commercial type eggs, 55.9 million layers producing broiler-type hatching eggs, and 2.48 million layers producing egg-type hatching eggs. Rate of lay per day on February 1, 2004, averaged 69.8 eggs per 100 layers, down slightly from a year ago.

Laying flocks in the 30 major egg producing States produced 6.88 billion eggs during January 2004, down 1 percent from a year ago. The average number of layers during January, at 315 million, was down 1 percent from a year ago.

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Wheat & Barley Movement

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